

Having a smear test



Easy Read 2017 edition



This leaflet has a few difficult words and ideas in it

We have made this leaflet as accessible as possible. There are still some difficult ideas in it. You might need to ask a friend, family member, carer or health professional to help you read this booklet.



Leaflets with the green thumbs up symbol on the cover have a small number of difficult words and ideas in them.



Leaflets with the orange thumbs up symbol on the cover have a few difficult words and ideas in them.



Leaflets with the red thumbs down symbol on the cover have quite a lot of difficult words and ideas in them.

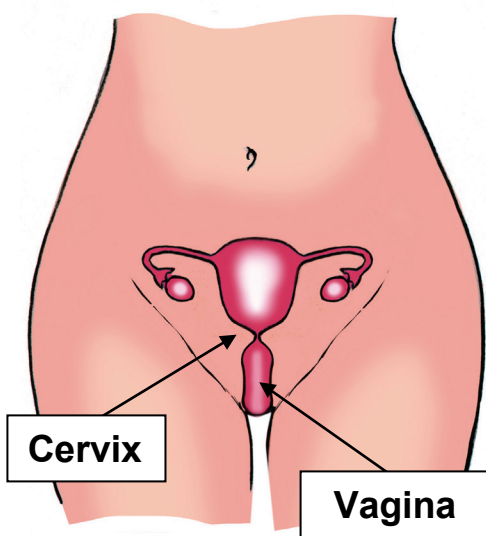


If you see the symbol on the left it means there is a difficult medical word. This is a word that you might hear when you visit your doctor. You might also see it on letters and leaflets you get from your doctor.



Cancer. This is a serious illness that can kill if it is not treated.

What is a smear test?



The smear test checks for changes in your cervix. Your cervix is inside your vagina.

The test checks for changes that might turn into cancer. We call this cervical cancer.



It's important to go for the smear test every time you are asked.



All women between 25 and 64 years old are asked to go for a smear test.

Why have a smear test?



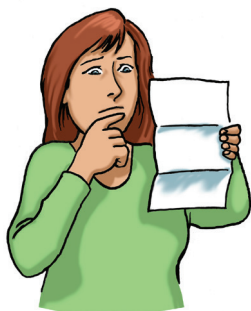
The smear test saves around 5,000 lives every year in the UK.

It can stop cervical cancer before it starts.



It's your best protection against cervical cancer.

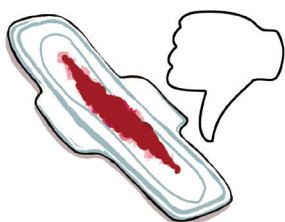
Making an appointment with your doctor.



You will get a letter in the post asking you to make an appointment for a smear test.



Phone your GP surgery and make an appointment to have a smear test.



Try to make an appointment for a day when you won't have your period.

What should you wear to the appointment?



It will be easier to do the test if you wear a skirt. You can keep it on while the test is done.



You can wear trousers if you like. You will have to take them off while the test is done.



It is best to wear clean pants to the appointment.

What will happen at your appointment



The smear test only takes five minutes and the nurse or doctor can answer any questions before you have it.



A nurse or female doctor will do the smear test. They will ask you questions about your health before they do the test.



You will be asked to undress from the waist down (or just to remove your underwear if wearing a skirt).



You will also be given a sheet to cover yourself.



It is normal for women to feel embarrassed, especially at their very first appointment, but remember we carry out smear tests every day.



You can stop the test at any time by telling the nurse or doctor.



You will be asked to lie on an examination bed.

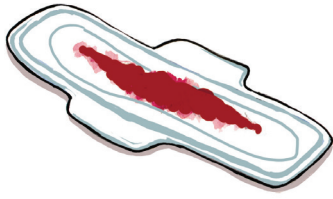


The nurse or doctor will gently put a speculum into your vagina to hold it open, so they can see your cervix.



They will then gently brush cells from the cervix using a soft brush.

After the test

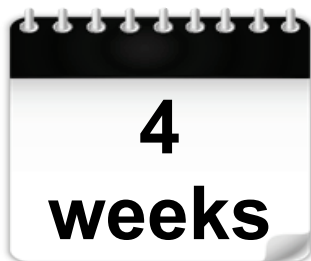


You might have some bleeding from your vagina after the test.

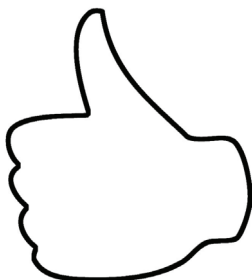


You might feel some cramps after the test.

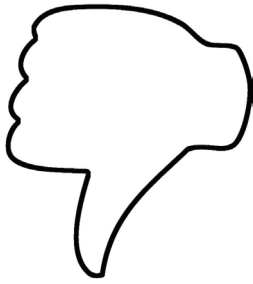
When will I get my test results?



You will usually get your results in the post within four weeks.



If your test is OK, you will be asked to have another smear test in 3 or 5 years.



If the test shows that something is wrong, you might need another test.

Sometimes the test doesn't work properly. If this happens you'll be asked to have the test again.



Virus. This is a kind of bug that causes disease.

What causes changes in my cervix?

Most changes are caused by a virus called HPV. HPV is very common and doesn't make you feel ill.



The HPV virus that can cause cervical cancer can be caught from other people while having sex.

Do I need the test?



Any woman who has had sex with a man or a woman should think about having a smear test.



This means anyone who has had any kind of sex or any kind of sexual touching.



Even if you have not had sex, you can still choose to have a smear test. It's your choice.

Where can I get more information?



For more information, talk to your midwife, practice nurse or GP, or call the NHS inform helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88). The helpline also provides a translation service.



Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust

www.jostrust.org.uk

0808 802 8000



This information is also available at

www.immunisationscotland.org.uk



For any other information, email

nhs.healthscotland-publications@nhs.net



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The original English version of this resource is also available in Urdu, Chinese and Polish.

NHS Health Scotland is happy to consider requests for other languages and formats.



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